

Armed Robbery

Written by {ga=paulcousineau}
Friday, October 05 2007 7:00 PM -

Great pitching beats great hitting. That's what Paul Cousineau told us before this series started. And that's what he's reminding us of as the Indians head to New York with a 2-0 series lead over the Pinstripes. In recapping last night's game, Paul hits all the high points. The squandered opportunities with runners on base early in innings. And the dominance and national coming out parties of Fausto and Raffy Left.



The Indians absolutely stole a victory from the Yankees, somehow winning despite squandering opportunity after opportunity, leaving 14 (FOURTEEN!) runners on base, and looking tight in tough spots at the plate for most of the night, as they now sit atop the "mighty" Yankees by a 2-0 margin heading to the Bronx.

Hafner's bases-loaded base knock to seal the victory was the defining moment of the young postseason (unless you count the 9th inning K for A-Rod) for the Indians and may be the at-bat that relieves the pressure from the young team, something that will be looked back on as the hit that catapulted them on a long (and strong) playoff run.

But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves and give credit where credit is due.

All those runs left on the bases not coming back to haunt the Tribe was made possible by the absolutely spectacular (marvelous, incredible, prodigious, fill in your favorite adjective here) pitching of Fausto Carmona and the continued domination of Rafael Perez out of the bullpen.

The Faustastic One was pitching on another plane, as the Yankee hitters weakly grounded out over and over (that is, when they weren't striking out...ahem, A-Rod) to really never mount a sustained rally. Outside of the hanging slider to Melky, the Yankees never got solid wood on anything that came out of Carmona's hand. He went the full 9, giving up 3 hits to the team that had the most hits in MLB this year

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(by the by, the Yanks now have 8 total in their first 2 ALDS games), with just 2 BB to go against his 5 K in what can only be described as an outing that announced Fausto's presence on the national scene. We've known about how special he is, watching him mature into a dominant starting pitcher in about 4 months, but I'm pretty sure that there are a few more million people punching their ticket for the Fausto Train tonight.

Relieving Carmona was The Scarecrow, who went about what seems to just be his customary 2 innings of relief without allowing a baserunner for the second night in a row. Perez so completely overmatched the Yankees lineup that, once the extra frames started, it felt like the only question was when the Indians would finally break through not if New York would mount a rally.

Do we believe that "Great Pitching beats Great Hitting" yet?

A-Rod, Matsui, and Posada all remain hitless through the first 2 games as the Tribe staff has run its postseason ERA to 1.80. It didn't matter who this Indians pitching staff was facing; any opposition would have been completely overmatched by the Tribe hurlers.

The Indians (whether you believe that the midges were a sign from above or not and wonder if the Joba Rules have been broken) sit firmly in the driver's seat of the series, bludgeoning the Yankees one night and eking out a win the next. And all of that has to do with the pitching that the Indians possess. Everything that the Indians are built on starts with the pitching and Fausto's performance in Game 2 certainly justified the strategy, one that bodes well for the rest of the playoffs.